

[132] CLAIMS

[133] We claim:

- 1 1. A method comprising:
2 receiving a call from a caller, the call being associated with a first merchant;
3 placing the call in a queue;
4 determining a second merchant; and
5 establishing a connection, the connection enabling communication between the
6 caller and the second merchant while the call is in the queue.

- 1 2. A method comprising:
2 receiving an incoming call from a caller;
3 placing the incoming call in a queue;
4 determining at least one merchant;
5 determining access information associated with the at least one merchant; and
6 establishing a connection based on the access information, the connection
7 enabling communication between the caller and the at least one merchant while the
8 incoming call is in the queue.

- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
2 transferring the incoming call to an attendant.

- 1 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
2 providing to the caller an indication of a plurality of entertainment option

- 1 5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
2 receiving from the caller an indication of at least one entertainment option.

1 6. The method of claim 2, in which determining the at least one merchant
2 comprises:
3 providing to the caller an indication of a plurality of merchants; and
4 receiving from the caller an indication of the at least one merchant.

1 7. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
2 determining information that is associated with the incoming call.

1 8. The method of claim 7, in which determining the information that is associated
2 with the incoming call comprises:
3 receiving the information that is associated with the incoming call from the
4 caller.

1 9. The method of claim 7, in which determining the information that is associated
2 with the incoming call comprises:
3 retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a
4 record of a database, in which the record is associated with the caller.

1 10. The method of claim 7, in which determining the information that is associated
2 with the incoming call comprises:
3 retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a
4 record of a database, in which the record is associated with the incoming call.

1 11. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
2 providing to the caller an indication of a plurality of entertainment options
3 based on the information that is associated with the incoming call.

1 12. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

2 providing to the caller an indication of the at least one merchant based on the
3 information that is associated with the incoming call.

1 13. The method of claim 7, in which determining the at least one merchant
2 comprises:

3 determining the at least one merchant based on the information that is
4 associated with the incoming call.

1 14. The method of claim 7, in which determining the at least one merchant
2 comprises:

3 determining a plurality of merchants based on the information that is associated
4 with the incoming call;

5 providing to the caller an indication of the plurality of merchants; and
6 receiving from the caller an indication of the at least one merchant.

1 15. The method of claim 7, in which the information that is associated with the
2 incoming call comprises at least one of:

3 a time the incoming call was received,

4 a time the incoming call has been on hold,

5 an indication of a category of the incoming call,

6 a name of the caller,

7 an identifier that identifies the caller,

8 a telephone number associated with the caller,

9 an address associated with the caller,

10 data indicating at least one purchase associated with the caller,

11 data indicating at least one reservation associated with the caller,

12 an indication of an area of expertise of the caller,

13 an indication of a rate charged for expertise of the caller, and

14 an account identifier that identifies a financial account associated with the
15 caller.

1 16. The method of claim 2, in which the access information comprises at least one
2 of:

3 a uniform resource locator (URL),
4 a telephone number,
5 a discount identifier that identifies a discount,
6 a promotional code,
7 a digital certificate,
8 an account number, and
9 a password.

1 17. A method comprising:
2 receiving an incoming call from a caller via a first connection;
3 placing the incoming call in a queue;
4 determining information that is associated with the incoming call;
5 providing to the caller a menu indicating at least one merchant;
6 receiving from the caller an indication of a merchant;
7 determining a telephone number associated with the merchant;
8 establishing a second connection between the caller and the merchant based on
9 the telephone number, the second connection enabling communication between the
10 caller and the merchant while the incoming call is in the queue; and
11 transferring the incoming call to an attendant.

1 18. The method of claim 17, in which determining the information that is
2 associated with the incoming call comprises:
3 receiving the information that is associated with the incoming call from the
4 caller via an interactive voice response unit (IVRU).

1 19. The method of claim 17, in which determining the information that is
2 associated with the incoming call comprises:
3 retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a
4 record of a database, in which the record is associated with the caller.

1 20. The method of claim 17, in which determining the information that is
2 associated with the incoming call comprises:
3 retrieving the information that is associated with the incoming call from a
4 record of a database, in which the record is associated with the incoming call.

1 21. The method of claim 17, in which providing to the caller the menu comprises:
2 providing to the caller the menu based on the information that is associated
3 with the incoming call.

1 22. The method of claim 17, in which the information that is associated with the
2 incoming call comprises at least one of:
3 a time the incoming call was received,
4 a time the incoming call has been on hold,
5 an indication of a category of the incoming call,
6 an indication of a position of the incoming call within the queue,
7 a name of the caller,
8 an identifier that identifies the caller,
9 a telephone number associated with the caller,
10 an address associated with the caller,
11 data indicating at least one purchase associated with the caller,
12 data indicating at least one reservation associated with the caller,
13 an indication of an area of expertise of the caller,
14 an indication of a rate charged for expertise of the caller, and

15 an account identifier that identifies a financial account associated with the
16 caller.

01-033 Filed 10-09-01